The COMMONWEAL

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Thoughts for Friends of Britain

LAST WEEK we urged that an official body be named to discover the facts about Europe and famine and the true attitudes thereto of the governments involved. But even without such a step being taken, one can carry analysis further. Let us consider the whole problem purely from the point of view of expediency. Assume there is a terrible likelihood of famine in Europe. England believes that if this continue, it will help to cripple German war efforts. What can we suppose that Hitler wants? We know he builds success by combining intelligence with ruthlessness. He has, in addition to his war with Britain, a tremendous job of policing. Contrary to a lingering popular opinion, "General Starvation," continued over a period of time, is a magnificent policeman. Stalin tried him out, believing it was so, and found his belief justified by events. So Hitler's simplest technique to quell resistance in conquered lands is by starvation to debilitate the people of those lands. Peter F. Drucker in a recent *Satevepost* says that this is precisely the nazi strategy. Furthermore, if a few hundred thousand men and women die in the process, they leave behind them at least potential *lebensraum.* Of course, for propaganda purposes such a policy works much better if Hitler can plausibly blame it on his enemy. If the British blockade does this part of Hitler's job for him, he is doubtless doubly pleased; he weakens his conquered population's physical fibre and creates animus amongst them against his own foe. On these assumptions, does not immediate expediency alone require that the burden of refusal—the burden of refusing a reasonably policed distribution of food in conqurered Europe—be placed on Hitler's shoulders? And suppose he accedes? If distribution is properly controlled, one effect will be to build up the physical strength of people who have no reason to like the nazis, much reason to like the nazis' enemy.

The Inauguration of Avila Camacho

Evolution South

MANUEL AVILA CAMACHO managed safely to succeed Cardenas to the presidency of Mexico, and his inauguration on December 1 was a festival of good, if tempered, hope. The governmental power has been transferred with no civil war, and there is assurance of sufficient continuity of policy to permit citizens to know more or less where they are at, even if that is not an all-around happy place. Fortunately also, the new administration has promised evolution away from some of the past policies of the Mexican government which have been most deplorable.

The Church has reason to hope for greater freedom of worship and religious expression, and for less persecution of its members. In the recent campaign the candidates were in competition for Catholic support, and both made hopeful advances and declarations. Mexico has in fact been officially and actively atheistic, persecuting Catholics and restricting Christian expression, while in the school system, and in all state propaganda, frankly fighting Christianity and indoctrinating children and badly educated adults with the crudest variety of materialism, a synthetic and devastating pseudo-philosophic construction of "socialism." There is no word yet about the new administration and education, nor about the state's policy toward the Church. We would regret continuity here.

Camacho considers his biggest problem to be economic expansion without exploitation by foreigners and home "capitalists." He has confidence that a government avowedly responsive to the poor and a strongly organized labor movement can prevent exploitation, while the country provides a fertile field for private enterprise. Clearly the Cardenas régime was, in economics, one-half a terrible failure. It did well in checking ordinary "capitalistic" profiteering and domineering, but in some cases it only substituted the state, and it did not keep up production, which declined until poverty grew worse and not less. If the Camacho government can guard against foreign and business exploitation, for the first time there will be a going political opposition to fight exploitation by the "ins" and by the state.

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The problem of the opposition will be a great one, which Camacho has not yet spoken about. On November 26, Almazan returned to Mexico, and, while still asserting his very possibly true triumph in the July election, he renounced the presidency. The holding of the election with a free press and relative freedom for an opposition campaign was a real democratic advance in Mexico. This advance was not carried as far as a certainly honest ballot which would deserve confidence. Now comes the equally hard problem of conducting politics with a strong personal and party opposition within the country. The democratic protestations of the administration will be hollow unless a creative rôle is allowed the party of Almazan.

Finally, there is the international problem of Mexico, and for the solution of that the US is chiefly responsible. That the US policy will be one of friendship for the government has been proven by actions, and now dramatized by the visit of Vice President Wallace. US Americans as well as Mexicans ought to try to keep that friendship cooperative and not smothering. The US will do much better to develop and not simply to control the strategically placed, rich and populous republic to the south. The objective must be longer-viewed than simply combat strength against external enemies. When, or if, the war crisis relaxes, North and Central America ought to be welded into a more prosperous, freer and more friendly neighborhood than it has been in the past. Mexico is the key country.

The Fine Young Men

WE WILL make no attempt to describe recent and terrible events in Roumania. Our protest a few weeks ago against what seemed with overwhelming likelihood to be political executions in Spain brought us letters saying that we were "sentimental" and that justice must always take its course. We were and we remain dismayed at the sight of political revenge, no matter how legalized, no matter in what cause. We are convinced that such action leads always to reprisals and creates a closed circle of unending horror. Roumania is now imprisoned within that circle. In these days, in Roumania, there are no trials, no pretense of justice—only revenge, only murder peculiarly revolting and cruel. The cause and the conflicting ideologies of this murderous frenzy remain concealed to us in the anarchy and obscurity of an unfortunate nation.

Revenge in Roumania

Yet there is one element which preordained the Roumanian political structure to violence and that element is visible in the news photographs published in all our papers. The immediate instrument for violence, the preparation for and acceptance of violence is in the pictures of the fine young men marching in the uniforms of their party and not of their country, armed not as soldiers but with bludgeons, those brutal and imbecile weapons which can serve only against unarmed men—devoted to a personal and party conception of their country's welfare. Always they are fine young men, these Italian, German, Spanish, Roumanian one hundred per centers. They march proudly, devotedly and recklessly to the destruction of their nation. In every case, through these marching fine young men, the rule of violence has been introduced—the men who work but do not march suffer the passions these young men have armed.

For Americans there is this moral to be drawn. There are people devoted to cooperatives, to Catholicism, to the Republican Party, to Judaism; there are people who see the safety of our country closely connected with the destruction of Catholicism, Judaism, the cooperatives, the Republican Party. Let them state their aims in civilized fashion under the law. But should good men or criminals, the noble or the imbecile, recruit fine young men to march in uniforms, stern and threatening, through our streets, then we must strip them of their uniforms. It is as simple as that, but to fail at that moment would mean civil war.

Protection As and When Most Needed

MODERN DIETETICS have established the fact that the leader among protective and nutritious foods is milk. There is an exact correlation between the rising health and longevity curve of the last century and the steadily increasing consumption of milk. Every doctor making a health check on a patient today—especially if that patient is a child—puts almost first in the routine the question of milk intake. Every dentist explains its need to almost everyone in his chair. Every social worker who is trained at all is trained to educate her charges to a knowledge of the sovereign quality of this food, and to help them plan expenditures so some minimum of it can be secured. And in the scientific planning of relief budgets, the milk allowance is almost invariably first. However, it is recognized that large groups of the least fortunate have not the means, even if they have the will, to get enough milk to keep their children healthy and strong. New York, for instance, has its seasonal free-milk drives, for the very young children of the poor. Recently the scope of this idea was enlarged to permit children in school to secure milk for their luncheon at the price of a penny. Finally, it has just been announced that relief families will receive a pint of milk free daily for each child under sixteen. The credit for this sensible and humane provision goes partly to its joint sponsors, Mayor La Guardia and the US Department of Agriculture, and partly to the thirty-five major milk concerns which are cooperating to put it into effect.

Free Milk

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Forum

I AM SORRY to say that I find your comments on Dr. Agar's article unsatisfactory. In the first place I regret the tone. No one, I am sure, would insult you by suggesting that you are neutrals, although the term "prudent" sounds oddly when used in connection with the pursuit of so great a good as real peace, and at a time when one is forced to consider what may be possible in the support of Christianity. To me the really disturbing thing about your editorial is that you read into Dr. Agar's article demands which it in no way contains. While he states categorically that throwing "all the power we can muster . . . on the side of England" is our one "chance left to avoid war," you insist that he wishes this country to enter "as a full belligerent" and to make "overt war." This is anything but fair. Again, I doubt whether you are justified in criticizing Dr. Agar for failing to define terms and to state a "practical objective," without yourselves showing the way. Since the nazis, being fundamentally anti-Christian, are impervious to argument, and since few people doubt that, having vowed our destruction as a "pluto-democracy," they will take measures against us at the time, and to the extent, which best suits them, one would be glad to know just what "prudent" course we may follow in securing "peace with justice" and in safeguarding Christianity. And surely such a phrase as "radical non-participation in a modern war" needs much analysis. This brings me to other points. Are we to feel that the moral law with respect to war must alter in conformity with changes in military techniques and resultant increase of destructiveness? Are we to conclude that authorities on participation in war are so divided that no sure guidance is to be had by Catholics? It would sadden some of us to feel that the study and meditations of Doctors of the Church, of Saints and Popes, extending over centuries, should leave us so leaderless. And some of the pronouncements are of recent date: *e.g.*, article 62 of the famous *Syllabus*, which denounces as an error the belief that "the principle of non-intervention (as it is called) should be proclaimed and observed."

As for your argument regarding the reservation made by Saint Ambrose to the effect that a government does not commit sin in withholding intervention where intervention "would expose its own people to excessive damage and destruction," it will be noticed that Saint Ambrose is merely teaching that the withholding of intervention in such circumstances *"is not a sin."* Hence the strongest conclusion which you can draw from this is about as follows: if we estimate that "damage or destruction" involved by intervention in the present struggle will be "excessive" in comparison with what there will be in the case of non-intervention, we shall not *sin* by staying out. But is abstention from sin, abstention justified on grounds of self-interest, the most desirable of Christian ideals? True, you refer to the "evils that would befall the peoples of Europe and the rest of the world if the United States were also to be fighting"; but these you do not define. Much less do you balance them against the evils (both sets being purely speculative) which will come to Europe and the world if our abstention means a British collapse. With regard to your statement that Dr. Agar's position would call for military action against the Chinese government, I think you overlook both practical difficulties and Catholic teaching. Even the Crusades can furnish no analogy. But, as respects "the fiery Moslems," I doubt whether even the *Catholic Worker* would suggest that Christian nations should have stood aside to allow a Mohammedan conquest of Europe. And do not the Mohammedan attempts to conquer Christian Europe obviously supply the nearest analogy in all history to what is now going on?

Finally, I must protest against your asking whether we may not "share the 'neutral' outlook of the Holy Father," since you made no attempt to meet Bishop Lucey's clear explanation of the differences which must exist between the position of the Pope and the position of other Catholics where neutrality is concerned. And, while it is obvious that all Americans have a "right" to object to intervention in the present struggle, I should be better satisfied if you had reminded your readers that the exercise of rights is less ethical than consideration of possible duties. Why you should assume that people who came to America to escape "turmoils" (have you forgotten malnutrition?) would not follow the counsel of intervention on behalf of their brothers in Europe as "a free act of conscience" I cannot see. And may I remind you that "conscientious interventionists," who are young enough, are enlisting (as they did in the last war) in so far as our government will allow, and in face of the most extreme peril. Conscientious objectors in *democracies* have little to fear nowadays.

You have asked what specific measures short of war we might now take. I present for the consideration of your readers a passage from a recent editorial in the *Louisville Courier-Journal:*

> First, we can repeal the Neutrality Act, a law which looks more sickly with every day's experience. It has become a disgrace, an admission that we do not mean business in opposing Hitler.
>
> Second, we can repeal the Johnson Act, a law which was passed on the lying assumption that we got into the last war to recover our debts, and which is preserved in the outrageous hope that only love of cash could move us to strong action today.
>
> With those laws out of the way our chances to help Britain would be increased many-fold. We could begin

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giving (not selling) the goods with which Britishers are helping to save our world. We could begin using American ships to take to the British Isles the machines without which the war must go against us in the spring.

Third, we could use American warships to convoy boats across the full extent of our declared "neutrality zone." Or we could convoy all the way to British ports.

Fourth, we can make easy the enlistment, in the armies of the British Empire, of large numbers of American aviators and mechanics. Twenty thousand such volunteers, in Britain or the Near East by next spring, might turn the tide of war and save our world from years of agony.

Fifth, we can promote some form of understanding among the English-speaking peoples, an alliance or a union looking toward a peace of justice in which all free men can share equally. We shall not conquer the Satanic daring of Hitler until we lift our imaginations to an equivalent daring in the service of Man.

In case you should honor this letter with any comment, allow me to add that I have not had time to consider how much of this editorial I should wish to endorse.

HERBERT C. F. BELL.

MAY I place myself on record as opposing the shipment of food and other supplies to the countries conquered and occupied by Germany. I see no reason to believe, even as a possibility, that such help would reach the people for whom it was intended. Our Christian charity, which inspires the desire to extend such help, therefore, is in some danger of seeking its own gratification, rather than the good of these unfortunate people. That good can scarcely be served by contributing to their further enslavement by placing supplies within the grasp of their de-humanized conquerors. In contrast we can expect positive evil to result from our misdirected charity, and we can expect to find that our help has been cynically appropriated by a government, that of Germany, which regards such charity as sentimental weakness, to be exploited for that government's own evil ends.

BARRY BYRNE.

A MANAGING EDITOR is usually happy enough if his magazine comes out with a minimum of misprints and grief; he simply has not time to worry as much as he might like about editorial policy (except in the paragraphs he himself writes) and he would be a simpleton if he expected to agree with every last thing printed in the editorials entrusted to his technical care. In the soul-sickening times through which we are passing, feelings run so high over immediate issues that only by the exercise of constant self-control, intellectual even more than moral, can we hope to catch even a momentary glimpse of the forest, so intense is our concentration on the trees. Hence I find myself constantly, by deliberate efforts of will, trying to temper my natural impulses.

Impulsively I am all for a resounding English victory, with America proudly in the fight and sharing the glory, with the Huns deservedly strafed, even if in the process the French suffer want. Let's try to forget all that . . . And the Poles don't need much food; they never had much under their degenerate, double-crossing *magnats* anyway. The Norwegians are nice people, but surely there aren't many of them; let them live off herring and hare, which are plentiful in those parts.

And then, impulsively, I wonder why that fine old lady who runs (or ran) the inn in Collobrières should starve. *Lapin* (with a healthy *g* added to the *n* when she said it) was somewhat of a treat for her, even in peace time. But even more, how about her grandchildren? And my cousins' children? For some of the blood that runs in me runs also in France; and my conscience knows that France's collapse was in large part a visible manifestation, a logical conclusion (the French *are* logical) to a general collapse which long ago took place, and took place here, also, and I shared in it. . . . Impulsively, perhaps it would be rather fun to go back into the catacombs.

But never do I have the least impulsive desire to see England lose, the least impulse to curtail aid to Britain, to see Germany win.

Trying to put order into this complex is not quite so simple as making a vector diagram. The wind actually blows north, and then it actually blows east. I cannot pretend that what we had was an average wind, nor'east.

Grant that England is the only winner compatible with our interests and our feelings. Grant that an English defeat is something we refuse *honestly* to picture, except as an academic possibility (we won't worry about that bridge until we have to cross it—which is a pleasant way of looking at it, but maybe there won't be any bridge)—grant that. What of an English victory? That could be bad too. It could be too muddled—too easy and too hard at once. We are told not even to *think* about that bridge. . . . Yet it seems to me that thinking about it, honestly *thinking* about all these problems, for Americans, is the most compelling duty of all, as Christians, as people.

But perhaps thinking is what we won't do. Perhaps we must all recuperate from a deeper collapse—the collapse France published—before any of us *can* think. I hope and pray it is not as bad as that.

Of one thing I am sure. If you say "any attempt to force the British blockade and feed the conquered populations of Europe is contrary to the best interests of Christianity," you make a statement that betokens little use of intellectual processes, little thought. *Attempting* (the attempt, of course, can fail, or prove ill-advised) to feed hungry people can never be against the interests of Christianity. Else Whirl is King.

HARRY LORIN BINSSE.

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ST. MARY'S CHARLES SEM... CARTHAGENA, ...

Communications

Staten Island, N. Y.

TO the Editors: Mr. Agar's article on neutrality represents the extreme interventionist viewpoint, of which we shall probably hear more as the tide of war hysteria rises. That viewpoint is briefly this: we have a moral obligation to help England beat Hitler; intervention now is the only way to make our aid effective; since he who wills the end wills the necessary means to that end, we must enter the war. Clearly this argument overlooks many theoretical and practical difficulties, to some of which THE COMMONWEAL referred in its excellent editorial comments on Mr. Agar's article.

It would be interesting indeed to know just what is the basis of this moral obligation and what is its extent. Pope Pius XII has labored incessantly to prevent the spread of the war, and has neither identified Hitler as Anti-Christ nor called for a crusade against him. The American bishops have seconded his appeals for peace. Yet Mr. Agar seeks to establish the existence of a moral obligation of the gravest kind, which is unknown to the Holy See and the bishops and is in direct conflict with their formal pronouncements. Moreover the Pope and their own national episcopates have not urged any of the countries contiguous to the belligerents to enter the struggle, and it is hard to see how America could be bound when European countries are not.

The practical objections to the interventionist argument are very great. Mr. Agar asks on what ground a state may remain neutral when one party to a war has evidently committed a wanton attack and the other is justly defending himself, and after examining the grounds usually offered for such an attitude, he rejects them all as unsound in our case. But if we have an obligation to attack the German government, have we not an obligation to attack the Soviet Union; or is it to be spared until it becomes clear that Stalin will not end up in the English camp? If Stalin does help England, what principle will Mr. Agar advance to justify such an alliance for England or America? Italy and Japan must be considered too. It is difficult to believe that the Italian attack on Greece or Italian colonial demands on England and France justify our declaring war on Italy, much less impose such a policy on us. No responsible voice suggested such a course when Italy attacked Albania, especially after England ratified her conduct. The practical difficulties involved in an attack on Japan are well known, and if we do not declare war on Japan for her aggression in China, can it be argued seriously that we are morally bound to defend the Dutch East Indies? If we must oppose not only aggressors but tyrannical and anti-Christian régimes, let us oppose all of them, not just a few. We might start with Mexico, where our intervention ought to be effective. Not all the dictators and anti-Christian forces are on the German side.

Many who are anxious for a British victory warn us solemnly against entering the war. The [ex-]Ambassador to London is one of these, and surely he is in a position to speak with authority. Even if we had a moral obligation to see England through at any cost it is far from clear that intervention is the only way or the best way to be of assistance to her.

Mr. Agar has pitched his argument in the wrong key. Secular power politics offers many practical reasons for helping England. An attempt to hitch Christian moral sentiment to the star of Anglo-American world hegemony will not help religion, however flattering it may be to our national sense of moral superiority. If the American people want this country to become a great imperial power, supplementing the Pax Britannica with the Pax Americana, policing the world, and sitting in judgment on all countries and institutions, they must bear the full responsibility for her conduct. Let us see this policy for what it is, and not try to base it on the Catholic religion or find in it the only hope for the Church. Mr. Churchill has declared that England is fighting to survive, not for the *status quo,* and that it is too soon to outline the peace a victorious England would impose. There is no evidence that those who govern England and this country would impose a Christian peace, even if they could. Surely we have no moral obligation to preserve the present boundaries of the Empire or to give Washington and London a blank cheque for the future.

Catholics will find a safe guide in the attitude of the Pope and the bishops, and in the teaching of the theologians. War is allowed as a last resort. Not only have we no duty to enter this war now, but we have no right to. Our duty is to do everything possible to avert war from this country and to relieve the misery of unhappy Europe.

FLORENCE D. COHALAN.

Montreal, P. Q.

TO the Editors: Mr. P. E. G. Quercus of the *Saturday Review of Literature* deserves a good shake hand: he is an excellent unpaid advertiser of THE COMMONWEAL. In the October 26 issue of the *SRL* he writes: ". . . the excellent Catholic weekly, THE COMMONWEAL. . . ." Well, I bought your weekly at a newsstand. Gentlemen, it is a hit.

As a Roman Catholic and a French Canadian by birth and education, I am naturally drawn towards French literature. But since the downfall of France, no French newspapers or reviews have ever reached me. As a citizen of America, it was natural enough that I look over our common frontiers and find out what was worth reading. I have bought the last two issues of THE COMMONWEAL and for some time will keep on buying this weekly at a newsstand, till I find the necessary five dollars for a year's subscription. Your weekly is worth every cent spent, or rather invested; for it is for the reader an investment of such a yield that no second thought can draw back the attention from it. I especially appreciate this *largeur de vue,* usually peculiar to Catholics because of their deep understanding of human nature and behavior, because of their earnestness to look behind the scenes of human emotions or motives, that is at the very heart of things and beings. Your November 22 number is a typical example of this *largeur de vue,* where the articles "Peace

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Is the Object" and "Can We Justify Neutrality?" exposes the extremes of a one and single thought. These apparent contradictions I used to get familiar with, for the French weekly *Temps Présent* and the French review *La Vie Intellectuelle* were profoundly rooted at the sources of the same doctrine which you so eagerly propagate.

RENÉ BEAULNE.

New Rochelle, N. Y.

TO the Editors: I should like to break a lance with you over your interpretation and criticism of William Agar's article, "Can We Justify Neutrality?" Fundamentally, I feel that Mr. Agar comes closer to the truth and a clear interpretation of the stand that Catholics should take than does your criticism. No justification for neutrality can be made, because neutrality is dead, killed by the absorption of Austria, the destruction of Czechoslovakia, the invasion of Poland, the occupation of Norway, Denmark, Belgium and Holland. . . . Neutrality cannot exist in a world which recognizes that brute military force can render it inoperative whenever necessary. Perhaps there should be no sad lamentations for the departure of neutrality. Too often in the past it has been the cloak behind which powerful countries such as the United States hid their unwillingness to accept their obligations. . . . The majority of Americans today realize that American neutrality no longer exists.

In the customs of nations, if neutrality ceases to exist, a state of belligerency comes into being. The totalitarian states have in this, as in every other custom of nations, disregarded the necessity of making an open proclamation of war, postponing until conquest their justification for it. Must the United States follow the totalitarian states in this respect, giving lip service to their disregard of international law by following their example? Both you and Mr. Agar forget that modern war is fought out along the production line, that basically it is economic. We are in the war economically; that is, in its most essential aspect. A declaration of war would make that participation more effective first by keying American manpower to the task before it. Secondly, it would clear the ground for more economic help to Britain as her dollar exchange supply runs low. Thirdly, American naval cooperation would render the blockade more effective. It would free forces now held for the home defense in Canada. Above all, it would free our consciences from the hypocritical assertions that we are a neutral, a non-belligerent. This last may seem of little importance in a world where materialism and national self-interest have put consciences to sleep. To Catholics, however, it should be a matter of prime importance.

The American Catholic's conscience can hardly be entirely clear in respect to what is happening in Europe today. The Holy Father, as Mr. Agar points out, and as I indicated in my pamphlet, "The Pope's Peace Program and the United States," has unequivocally stated his position on the justice of the fight against totalitarianism. . . . You say that "Neither the Pope nor the European hierarchies have advocated the extension of the war to America." Is it necessary that the Holy Father make a special address to Catholics in each and every nation of the world in order that what he says should become binding? If so, it would seem to indicate that the Catholic Church has become a union of national churches which feel summoned to obey only when a particular special appeal is made to them. Your argument that the millions of European families who came to America to escape Europe's turmoils should be free from intervention does not take into consideration the fact that European Catholics coming to America do not thereby escape the obligation to fight for the preservation of Catholicism. Geographical situation should have no bearing upon the obligations of Catholics.

It has become a convenient refuge to use Saint Ambrose's rule of intervention: "that it is not a sin to fail to repel an injury done one's neighbor if one has not the ability to help him. That is, neither the military nor economic strength, or because the distance is too great, or in the case of governments because it would expose its own people to excessive damage or destruction." You say that Mr. Agar did not take up the important sector of the argument contained in the last phrase. Does this imply that America is too weak to participate in the struggle for the standards of Christianity? True, we might not be able to contribute much in the direction of trained military men, but at present that is England's slightest need. Certainly we can contribute much economically. The argument that the distance is too great hardly holds in the twentieth century. The totalitarian countries have not found it so in their proposed division of the world. As for excessive damage and destruction which might accrue to America, have the editors of THE COMMONWEAL considered what might happen should Britain be defeated and the United States left alone in the world to face economic and military warfare of the totalitarian states? American failure to throw its weight might conceivably lengthen the period of the war and thus increase the suffering throughout the world. The spectacle of a great nation fighting for the return of Christian principles to international relations would give heart throughout the world to peoples groaning under despotism and military violence. If we fail to lend our moral force to the cause of nations that are fighting for freedom, we will put off active entry for a time, but when we do enter, solely as a self-protective measure and in self-defense, we may discover that those who might have been our allies have succumbed and we shall be left to face the revolutionary spirit of the new religion of national socialism, fascism, and communism with the cold comfort that we are fighting for our homes, but have eliminated the spiritual values we might have fought for. This moral consideration is of tremendous importance, and there is no place for it in your position that "the best course lies in positive action *between* appeasement and armed intervention." What are these positive actions which can stop "short of war"?

It is somewhat unfair, I believe, to infer from Mr. Agar's argument that its logical conclusion leads to military attack upon all those who deny human rights and all those who seek to spread false religions. First of all,

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Mr. Agar's position does not preclude the use of economic force. Secondly, in a world organized as it should be, great nations should rise up and protect the small and the weak, guaranteeing them the right to existence. In his Christmas Message the Holy Father made himself very clear on this point. Any permanent peace must be based upon the fact that the strong will help the weak. We should have used economic force to force Japanese withdrawal from China; we should have taken strenuous measures to prevent Russia from attempting to exterminate Christianity root and branch. You question "how about all the fiery Moslems?" forgetting that the Catholic Church fought them with armed men from the eleventh through the sixteenth century. Did not the Holy Father, in referring to Don John's victory over the Turk at Lepanto, declare, "There was a man sent from God and his name was John"? Catholics should fight for the preservation of the Church anywhere and at any time. As this new version of Mohammedanism, national socialism, sweeps over Europe, are Catholics any more free of the obligation to fight for their faith than Don John? With millions of Catholics without voice under German rule today, should Catholics throughout the rest of the world stand by apathetically and consider what is to their own best national interest for the moment?

One last point should be taken into consideration. Should the United States supply arms to Great Britain so that the war may go on while we sit back with the smug attitude that while British men, women and children are being blown to bits, fighting for what we believe is right, no American is in mortal danger in the struggle? Morally that does not put us in the best position in the world. If we believe that what the English are fighting for is right, we should be willing to face the fact that eventually we may have to go all the way in participation. Failure to face that fact in time may have disastrous effects upon the whole world. A defeat of totalitarianism, a restoration of Austria, Czechoslovakia, Poland, Norway, Denmark and Holland with the necessary military force to prevent their re-absorption will lead to a system of more permanent peace based upon Christian principles. If a victory of Britain will lead to that system and American participation will make a victory of Britain more certain and more rapid, then by all means the United States should recognize its active participation and cease hiding behind a false front of neutrality. Advocacy of this point of view by the editors of THE COMMONWEAL might give American Catholics the leadership they so badly need at this time.

JAMES M. EAGAN.

New York, N. Y.

TO the Editors: "If Mr. Agar's argument, texts and all, is carried to its logical conclusion, it means that we would attack in military force all those who deny human rights and all those who seek to spread false religions. . . . we should take on Japan . . . even the Chinese themselves . . . should have invaded Soviet Russia long ago . . . how about the fiery Moslems?"

The editors are quite logical. I would add a few things more to fight, things that most Americans who get up steam to fight the world never think about at all. May I list a few people I would send an army against if I had (1) the army to send and (2) Mr. Agar's fervor?

I would send an army and navy against Senator "Cotton Ed" Smith of South Carolina, and all other politicians who stay in office through the patent disfranchisement of Negroes and poor whites of the South; who stay in office and promote legislation for the purpose of keeping Negroes slaves and poor whites poor. I would consult no other literature than Mr. Agar's article and dispatch an army straightway not only against Hitler, who proposes to take over Africa for exploitation, but an army and navy against the present exploiters of Africa and India and a lot of China that neither the Japanese nor the Chinese government controls today. I would send a part of the army, at least the Home Defense part, against aircraft officials who refuse to hire Negro artisans right here in New York; who refuse to hire graduates of New York's trade schools *because of color*. I would dispatch units of the army against the army itself, for long-time discrimination against Negro soldiers and officers. The navy, oh the navy! for discrimination against Negroes I would have the navy scuttled!

This is not what I am setting out to do, but what I would feel free to attempt if I accepted Mr. Agar's logic. However, in the defense of culture and all that is good, I do propose that the intelligent people in America make an effort to understand what lies back of my facetious warmongering in the paragraph above. It will not be done in this generation, but unless the future Mr. Agars develop a broad understanding of the problem of Negroes and poor whites in America, bang! something drastic is going to happen.

GEORGE STREATOR.

Song of the Fallen Nations

There is no seal of harvest upon this
Afflicted autumn at the end of rain
When every scar of earth runs blood again.
Like leaves that no more put their emphasis
Upon the branch but follow a dark will
Down to the furthest hollow of the hill,
We are blown outward on a gust of pain.

We must not in our arrogance suppose
That we are grain now gathered in as seed
For mankind's later nourishment or need,
Nor are we the pressed petals of a rose
Nor even the bright flash of bitter-sweet
Sold on the corner of a windy street
For later beauty, color against snow.

No, it is in the way of leaves we go
Who quit the sustenance of the safe tree
And take, instead, the wind's wide treachery.
Now we are cast between the earth and sky
Borne up by pain and passion and unreason.
We ride the wind of a most lonely season.
We die because the wind would have us die.

JESSICA POWERS.

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Blood for Britain—And U. S. A.

How the war has stimulated medical work on the curative use of blood.

By Julietta K. Arthur

EXACTLY forty years ago an American scientist, Dr. Karl Landsteiner, Nobel prize-winner, startled the medical world by solving a problem which had plagued it for nearly four centuries. In 1900, by his momentous discovery that all mankind's blood can be divided into four types, Dr. Landsteiner brought transfusions out of the occasional, miracle-working class into the ordinary realm of every-day science.

A decade ago the Blood Transfusion Betterment Association was organized in New York to curb dangerous traffic among those, sick or well, determined to sell as many pints of their blood as possible, at $35 and up. A frantic father's plea for a donor whose blood would match his son's, tainted by a rare disease, launched the spectacular "Legion of Blood Donors," now gathered in an emergency by radio. Three years ago Cook County Hospital formed the first "blood bank" in the world to meet just such dire situations in Chicago.

Today another epoch-making discovery coming out of American laboratories is likely to change all that. Since mid-summer all New York City has become a gigantic blood research project, with English victims of German bombs as its immediate beneficiaries. For the first time in medical history a way has been found to take fresh blood, preserve it, and ship it three thousand miles across the sea.

If experiments now going on in eight hospitals in New York and elsewhere continue to prove successful, there will be no more need for dramatic, last-minute calls for blood donors. For plasma—the life-giving proteins of the blood, separated from its cells—does not require typing. Unlike fresh blood, it can be pooled with that of any healthy person, and may be transported anywhere. Whole blood is dangerous when it is much over a week old; plasma has a much longer life.

Our own army and navy

Although it has not been featured in the general press, there is already under way a nation-wide project to furnish plasma to both the army and navy. If present plans materialize, emergency blood transfusions for wounded soldiers near the front lines will be possible for the first time in American military practice. The Surgeon General of the Army has asked the Red Cross to help establish this service on a war-time basis by securing volunteer donors, willing to give their blood, in various key centers.

"In the event of a national emergency," says Dr. William De Kleine, Medical Adviser of the American Red Cross, "we could start delivery of plasma ten days after enrollment is completed."

The project of course is part of the national defense program. But it is more than that. It is a grim determination on the part of medical men not to repeat the hospital experiences of the last World War, when huge mortality lists piled up mainly because at the critical moment there was insufficient blood on the spot to be used for transfusions.

For the time to transfuse patients is immediately after an injury occurs, not a few hours later. In addition, thousands of soldiers rescued from the battle-field died, not from wounds, but of that baffling and dangerous condition known as "shock" in which the body goes into a state of collapse, the skin grows cold and clammy and the blood pressure and volume falls with alarming suddenness. This was such a constant danger in the first World War that committees in all nations were appointed to study it. But if plasma, administered from a sterile container, can overcome "shock" on the combat front, it can also be an invaluable aid to overcome the same condition in peace-time where physicians fight it after accidents, serious burns, vital operations or virulent infections.

Plasma, known experimentally in a few hospitals here and abroad, sprang into international prominence in the summer of 1940. At that time Dr. John Scudder, New York blood research specialist, appeared with a quart jar of plasma in his hand in Washington before Norman Davis, Chairman of the American Red Cross. Backed by scientists in the Blood Transfusion Betterment Association, he pled for the cooperation of the Red Cross in sending plasma to England, momentarily expecting waves of German bombers. "We can use three hundred liters weekly!" the head of the British Red Cross cabled Chairman Davis.

Back in New York, Dr. Scudder hastened to his laboratory, the year-old "blood bank" at Presbyterian Hospital. By mid-August the first ship-

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ment of fifty liters went by clipper to London. It had been gathered from nurses and physicians at the Hospital, eager to be the first donors to meet England's need. Then, as fast as hospitals could meet the requirements in equipment and personnel, the project was extended. By September first, all New York's population stood ready to respond.

Since then, at the rate of a thousand a week, typical New Yorkers — débutantes and scrubwomen, brokers and day-laborers — have each donated a pint of their blood for Britain. By January first twenty thousand of them will have volunteered, some of them more than once.

The response

The list of celebrities who have responded to the stirring call, "Wanted! Emergency blood for war wounded!" is an imposing one. But alongside the Ranee of Sarawak, wife of the only English rajah in the world, Joan Bennett, the film star, Newbold Morris, president of the New York City Council, Betty Nuthall, the British tennis ace, there is an equally important list of names—German-born citizens, and immigrants, newly-arrived in the United States. Up on the heights of New York, which newspaper reporters have dubbed "The Fourth Reich," a crowd of them have been pouring into Presbyterian Hospital on plasma-clinic days. Most of them are refugees. For the most part they are lacking in money, but they do have blood—for Britain. Last week a tall, erect, white-haired man appeared. "My name is Schmidt," he said. "I was a German soldier in the last World War. When I was a prisoner in England, a nurse there saved my life. I want to repay that debt now."

The actual process is simple enough. Anyone between twenty-one and sixty can qualify if he's healthy and can stand pain no more intense than a pin-prick. Within thirty minutes, at most, he can go about his ordinary business.

The process

In transfusions of fresh blood, the fluid goes from the donor directly into the blood vessels of the patient. But for plasma, the blood goes into a bottle containing sodium nitrate, which prevents clotting. Then it is tested for syphilis; if found pure it is placed in a refrigerator overnight. The following morning the dark red cells have fallen to the bottom and the plasma has risen to the top. Now it is ready to be separated from the corpuscles. Large hospitals like Mt. Sinai and Presbyterian have centrifuges which act like a cream separator, whirling the liquid around at the rate of 2,000 revolutions per minute, completing the process in an hour. Others use the "natural" method, which means the plasma rests in its original container for another five days to "settle." In either case the plasma is then siphoned off and a preservative added. The resulting plasma-saline, after another ten days' testing of the yellowish liquid for possible germ growth, is sent to a cold storage warehouse, to await transport to London.

But scientists are cautious. Every carton which leaves the secret warehouse on New York's waterfront, where a thousand quarts of plasma are stored now awaiting shipment, bears this label: "In case of infection, excessive fibrin formation, or reaction following its infusion, please be good enough to send a card to us directly, or to Sir Edward Mellanby of the Medical Research Council of Great Britain, stating briefly your findings. This is our only check on the final results and a word from you may be helpful." It is signed "The Blood Plasma Division, Blood Transfusion Betterment Association of New York."

Word has come back. In the beginning, stenographers rushed up from Wall Street to Lenox Hill or Memorial Hospital after swallowing a quick lunch, in anxious haste to donate their blood. Or pretty débutantes, en route from a cocktail party, stopped at Mt. Sinai Hospital for the same purpose. Cables came from London. The fatty globules which remained in the plasma because food had just been eaten was slowing up recovery of those wounded civilians and soldiers to whom it had been thankfully given. Now donors are warned to fast for four hours before they go to the hospital for the brief quarter of an hour during which their blood is drawn off for Britain.

Again, ordinary jars, similar to those glass containers housewives use for canning fruit, were used to preserve blood for the first trans-Atlantic shipments. Trial and error revealed they were allowing too much of the precious fluid to be diffused. So Dr. Scudder began to experiment with various shaped flasks. Today a special receptacle with a narrow center section is helping to retard denaturation.

Dried blood

Over at Bryn Mawr Hospital in Philadelphia, Dr. Max Strumia, one of the great blood research scientists in America, for some time now has been experimenting with "dried blood," which may revolutionize the treatment of soldiers on the battlefield.

Dr. Strumia has succeeded in developing a method of dehydration which reduces whole blood to a powder by a process similar to that used by manufacturers of dried foods. The blood is placed in a sealed receptacle and moisture is drawn off by a vacuum pump. The gray substance which is left resembles powdered milk. Dried plasma, as far as is known now, will last indefinitely while the liquid form will deteriorate in a year, sometimes in less time. But powdered plasma must be kept in its original air-tight jugs, and distilled

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water must be used to fill the jar and restore the original properties of the blood. A physician rushing to aid a gunner fallen from his post in a torpedoed ship would have no time for that.

Meanwhile, medical men all over the country are watching those shipments of liquid plasma to Britain. Long after this War has gone into bloody history, some child suffering from a virulent germ, a John Doe struck by a hit-and-run driver, will benefit by those careful records kept by harried physicians this year in England.

There is little doubt that Britain welcomes continued cooperation. In early September Dr. G. P. Drury of the British War Office, urging increased volume of plasma shipments from America, said, "The possibility of invasion and large scale air raids upon a densely civilian-populated country, together with a large army, necessitates the holding of very considerable quantities of fluid suitable for transfusion, and its wide distribution in many localities. . . . Schemes are in operation to make this country self-sufficient in this matter, but the building up of an organization to deal with these huge requirements must take time."

Extension of the project to the rest of the United States requires personnel trained to prepare plasma and to keep abreast of the constantly changing aspects in this newest field of blood research. Furthermore, it takes funds.

At Mt. Sinai Hospital, for example (and similarly elsewhere in New York) a volunteer group of about one hundred and twenty-five doctors, nurses and technicians give their services after they finish their own day's work. The central supply room is working overtime to make necessary medical supplies, the laundry to take care of additional gowns and linens; receptionists, nurses' helpers and dietitians prepare records in their off-hours.

But if plasma continues to pass rigid tests of medical men, and if it is needed—at home or abroad—plasma donors can be found, and the necessary money with it. Even if by a miracle it should no longer be necessary in Britain, or if by an almost equally great one preparations, medical and otherwise, should suddenly stop for our own defense, out of the senseless tragedy of the war-wounded, science will have been enabled to take a great step forward.

Organized Sound for the Sound Film

By EDGAR VARESE

AS THE TERM "music" seems gradually to have shrunk to mean much less than it should, I prefer to use the expression "organized sound," and avoid the monotonous question: "But is it music?" "Organized sound" seems better to take in the dual aspect of music as an art-science, with all the recent laboratory discoveries which permit us to hope for the unconditional liberation of music, as well as covering, without dispute, my own music in progress and its requirements.

I am sure that *organized sound* has an ever more important rôle to play as a dynamic-dramatic element in motion pictures. But we must unmuzzle music if we are to allow it to perform its function of arousing people and making them feel. Its power of suggestion is more compelling than that of any of the other arts, since its actual physical attack is more difficult to escape and more all-pervading. Being master of the greatest range of sensations and emotions, from the most physical reactions to the most abstract conceptions, *organized sound* may be called upon to intervene at the point where the spoken word has reached the limit of its efficacy, and where the precision of the image only tends to limit the flight of the imagination.

The microphone is an incomparably keener detective than our modest eardrum, so why should we impose on it our anatomic limitations and, at the moment when the film has become as sensitive to sound-waves as to light-waves, why try to restrain the rôle of *organized sound?*

A new dramatic situation in a motion picture will call for corresponding new use of *organized sound,* its obvious purpose being to stimulate adequate response. On the choosing and proportioning of *organized sound,* on the fitness of the sonorous background, may well depend the degree of success of the picture. Much of the recent criticism of the over-loud blaring of the conventional orchestra throughout the progress of the film comes from a realization—conscious or unconscious—that the emotional appeal of the music is too reminiscent of past experiences and does not correspond directly enough to the actions taking place on the screen. It becomes either an irritant or an opiate rather than a cooperative factor for heightening dramatic effects, or underlining meanings specifically related to the particular moment of the picture, or intensifying emotion. There is a discrepancy between the events and interests of our epoch and a sound commentary produced by concert instruments which had already reached their climax in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, and whose texture cannot possibly suggest the sounds we expect to find surrounding the action or the visually logical source of these sounds.

I am not, of course, considering the purely musical film: opera, musical comedy, etc., these being in a special category as the direct transposition to the screen of an already existing theatrical form of entertainment; nor the historical or ethnic films which have their own special musical requirements. The conventional orchestra, or varied combination of old and exotic instruments and the human voice, will always be needed in motion pic-

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tures when the situation specifically calls for them.

However, when on the screen we see a tremendous outburst of nature—for instance a tornado—the accompanying commentary by a large symphony orchestra is too apt to evoke in the hearer not this particular, real drama of nature, but rather a gesticulating conductor leading his men through a tempest of "William Tell" or "The Flying Dutchman" or any other too well-remembered chromatic program music. Why not startle the imagination into a realization of the reality of the unfolding drama (whether of nature or human lives) by the use of combinations of sound possible today but which never before today could have been produced? We now are in possession of scientific means not merely of realistic reproduction of sounds but of *production of entirely new combinations of sound,* with the possibility of creating new emotions, awakening dulled sensibilities. Any possible sound we can imagine can be produced with perfect control of its quality, intensity and pitch, opening up entirely new auditory perspectives. And these sounds must not be speculated upon as separate entities for sporadic, atmospheric effects but taken as thematic material and organized into a score standing on its own merit.

Between this sound score and the dramatic continuity the relation must be one of intimate and interacting connection; a relationship of unity, of form and of rhythm. But this weaving together of the disparate sonorous and visual elements which will make of a film a unified whole cannot be achieved by the device of an imitative repetition of the visual. Although certainly unintentional, there is something very comical, even of the nature of parody, in the usual musical procedure: the music scampering to keep up with the action, increasing in volume and tempo in an impossible effort to express exactly the same thing in the same way. Children are sounder critics than tag-dazed adult audiences. In cheap motion picture houses in popular neighborhoods I have often heard them laugh spontaneously at such would-be serious musical commentary. The sound-film and the light-film, using two distinct mediums, should not attempt identity. They should complement each other. Often the most exciting moment of a dramatic situation will be far more enhanced by an abrupt, timely suspension of all sound than by any musical outburst. The simultaneous opposition of dynamics is a most effective device and I wonder that it is so seldom used.

It should not be forgotten that the sound film is still very young. The technical struggles of adjustment of the new medium to the already well developed older one accounts for much that has been obviously bad in sound filming up to now. But that is over. Technically the sound-film has caught up to the light-film. But the smug satisfaction displayed over the simple fact of the remarkable technical improvement achieved in so short a time seems to blind everyone to the glaring lack of dramatic, emotional and rational adjustment still existing between sound and vision. Most large industries find it expedient to have research laboratories. It seems to me that the motion picture industry might profit (even in the dollar sense in the end) in having a laboratory or a department for the study of the problem of a more complete and understanding use of the sound apparatus. There is scarcely more than a bowing acquaintance between the music and the sound departments. What they need is to take off their coats and sweat together. There should be a co-ordinating department where composer, or *sound organizer,* and electrical engineer work together.

This art-science of *organized sound* for films might profitably consider another art: architecture. For architecture, like music, is an art-science whose aspect as an art necessarily changes as science gives it new structural possibilities and life gives it new needs. But, unlike music, it is making full use of science and is meeting our new needs. And the man of today responds to its new constructions. Think of the thousands who flock to see the great engineering-architecture masterpieces such as Boulder Dam! Here architecture speaks the language of our own time and is understood. In the construction of our modern pyramids and cathedrals: dams, bridges, industrial plants, grain elevators, laboratories, etc., the tendency toward rigorous predicision, utilization of forces and materials, has merged architect and engineer. But in music, that other art-science, we have hardly begun to make use of the discoveries of science. We have not yet given people the new musical language of their own day. Although the classical symphony orchestra responds to all the requirements of the past, it is inadequate to express our new musical conceptions. As the architect bases his structures on a perfect knowledge of the materials he uses—their resistance, their reaction, their tensile strength—the composer today should, in building his sonorous constructions, have a thorough knowledge of the laws governing the vibratory system in the atmospheric domain, and of the possibilities that science has already abundantly placed, and continues to place, at the service of his imagination. The last word is: Imagination.

Views & Reviews

BY MICHAEL WILLIAMS

MY READERS must, I am sorry to say, try to put up with rather scrappy entertainment (if any) and fragmentary bits of mental nourishment this week because of circumstances hereinafter (as our legal writers say) to

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be explained. For, as it happened, before I could find time, not to mention any theme, for this column, I was obliged to anticipate its writing to clear the way for an engagement that would take up the whole day usually set aside for these views and reviews of books, persons and this and that and the other thing that appeals to my own interest, and may, I always am hopeful, interest others.

Now the time I found was forced upon me, so to speak, as one result of the recent great American revolution and counter-revolution in the matter of the date of Thanksgiving Day. I had eaten (and very heartily, thanks be) of the traditional turkey and cranberry sauce and stuffing and all the rest of the "fixin's," on the old-time, pre-Roosevelt, traditional day. I did so in spite of my somewhat reluctant yet loyal support of the new date, in deference to reactionary members of the family. One of them just couldn't see anything to be thankful for anyhow in the election results; the other, and most important, had voted for Roosevelt, but being a many-generationed New Englander, of the Wooden Nutmeg State, Connecticut, she just wouldn't stand for any tampering with our national, or especially her native state's, festival dates. And such folk are very "sot in their ways." As she was to cook the turkey, that settled the matter.

Having recklessly stuffed myself, I found that I was unable, or unwilling, to tackle any subject—still less to think of one—really worthy of that sustained elevation of thought and that orderly yet eloquent style of expressing it in which, as it is well known, all writers for THE COMMONWEAL excel—or don't we? So, I went to bed—but in the watches of the night, I was aroused from a nightmare (in which Wendell Willkie seemed at last to have forced the "Third Term Candidate" to talk turkey, and both were going after each other through loud-speaker radio blasts, mixed with jazz bands syncopating "God Bless America!" in strident competition to "Happy Days Are Here Again!"). After I had drenched my overworked innards with bicarbonate of soda, the best I could do with the rest of the night was to put together a few paragraphs, skimmed from the surface of what no longer could be referred to as my mind, except in derision, just as they happened to bob up through the post-Thanksgiving reaction—or eructation!

HOWEVER, come to think of it—if it is a thought, and not a mere excuse for one—since I must, for a week or ten days, at least, myself put up with many meals made up of the remains of that turkey: snacks and bits and soup made from the bones and hash to wind it all up (and how good that hash will be!) there is something vaguely appropriate, it seems to me, in serving up my views and reviews this week in the same sort of fashion. In other words, in a sort of hash, I suppose; but if it turns out one little bit as flavorsome and appetizing and nourishing as I find turkey hash to be, nobody need mind!

It is one of the main maxims of the creed of materialism —against which all departments of this journal wage war on many fronts—that man is what he eats. Of course, that egregious error has at least a flavor of truth, like all other heresies and mistakes, for all simply must be tinctured with some truth in order not at once to be rejected by mankind: always eager to find the truth that sets men free and opens the way to a life of happiness. So perhaps my meal of Thanksgiving turkey will aid me, in spite of the nightmare it induced, to flavor this journalistic hash with some little spicing of desirable stuff.

MOREOVER, "column" departments in journalism, after all, originally were just like this one in that they talked of many things, like the walrus; and thus I am really returning to the high origins and reviving (humbly) a great tradition of this journalistic device, which is associated with such true and creative columnists as Eugene Field and Philip Hale and Bert Leston Taylor; and which is carried on valiantly in our degenerate days (Awg-g-gh! hu-u-up! *why* did I eat so much turkey on the wrong day?) by the inimitable F.P.A. Long may he flourish!

Such genuine columns depended, first of all, on the wit and style and often, as in Philip Hale's case and that of F.P.A., on erudition as well. They were columns intended for intelligent readers. They were not mass-production, stream-lined messes of standardized gossip, or wearisome political propaganda. They were columns edited by men not eager to make money first, but chiefly interested in life and letters and rejoicing in the charitable and delightful opportunities to select from among the work of younger and unknown writers the cream of the crop of new ideas and fresh styles. Thus many a genuine if minor poet or budding critic or aspiring novelist was discovered. Moreover, through the generous personal interest of such columnists the happy and inspiring knowledge was implanted in young writers that they were being initiated into journalism—and at times in literature—under most favorable auspices, like apprentices in a guild where the art and mystery of letters is respected and the business office is only a necessary evil.

What are mis-called columns today are really syndicated editorials or essays or articles of various degrees of literary or journalistic value; ranging from the heights graced by Walter Lippmann and Dorothy Thompson to the—well, name your pet aversions, among the others, for yourself. As for the gossip and scandal "columns," they are the very dregs of a misunderstood democratic process, and the spoiled lees of the wine of liberty. Such trashy selling devices are sins heavy on the souls of the masters of our "free press," and are pernicious perils to true democracy. I cannot name my pet horror among such de-gentry: I would no more read them nor listen to their sordid stuff over the radio, willingly, than I would knowingly drink sewage when I am thirsting for water or wine.

WELL, getting back to my Thanksgiving night, I must admit that my nocturnal troubles were solely due to my own greediness, not to the exceptionally good and well-cooked bird itself. Moreover, my wrong-date Thanksgiving had been brightened by less material nourishment, and entertainment well calculated to put me into a mood for thanksgiving. For a box containing a set of THE COMMONWEAL Christmas cards had reached me. Last week I wrote about them, as I hope you remember

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(and trust that your remembrance caused or will cause you to write for a set yourself). I had praised the cards, but purely on faith; yet, of course, I was aware of the good taste of those directing that admirable scheme; and so, behold, faith again had justified itself! They are admirable cards indeed.

Also, a letter had come from Maurice Lavanoux, the energetic Secretary of the Liturgical Arts Society, thanking me for last week's article. And how good it is to be thanked—how pleasant to be praised! A thought, however, which left a sting in its wake. This was because Lavanoux's generous letter of thanks for my little "plug" for his beloved Liturgical Arts Society (one of the real glories of the Church in America) had also called my attention to the unfortunate fact that in writing about the beautiful transformation of the Westport, Connecicut, parish sanctuary I had failed to name the architect and decorator who had so excellently realized the pastor's (Father Degnan) exemplary reform. For that matter, neither had I named the pastor nor the eloquent curate, whose *ferverino* about genuine Christmas cards I paraphrased in the article last week. Well, his name is Father Scully—and I think that the rising generation of Westport's Catholic boys and girls will, as men and women, have good cause to bless that name. Especially the artists among them; if they should develop any of that sort of Ishmaelite, whose whole tribe suffers so much today, neglected, and even suspected as they are, in the household of their Mother, the Church. In better times she cherished them and reaped the reward of their Thanksgiving in her cathedrals and shrines and in all the wealth of her liturgical appointments.

However, I do not regret my omission of the names of the priests so much as I do that of the name of the artist. The priests who count for most in the life of the Church are ordinarily not the ones who gain (still less the ones who seek) the spot-lights of that modern parody of fame, publicity. Artists, however, require it. Truly it is a poison, a drug for soils; yet, like other poisons, strychnine, for example, when taken in small, carefully regulated doses, it may be a necessary tonic. And most certainly I should have given proper publicity to the artist who has brought such appropriate beauty into the sacred precincts of the Church of Our Lady of the Assumption in Westport—Oliver Reagan. May the day not be distant—it will be another thanksgiving time—when small towns and villages throughout the land will have priests like Fathers Degnan and Scully and artists like Oliver Reagan, all of them serving the high purposes of Mother Church, and all supporting, or belonging to, the Liturgical Arts Society!

I UTTER the above wish (or prayer, indeed) with a special urgency because of my harassing memories of the radio broadcast from the Town Hall "Town Meeting on the Air," to which I listened on the night of my Wendell Willkie Thanksgiving day. If I suffered from indigestion, surely it was due to those dreadful speeches, and not to the excellent turkey (and Peggy's little more excellent cooking). What the Chinese Ambassador, who was one of the chief speakers, said had point and cogency; but the

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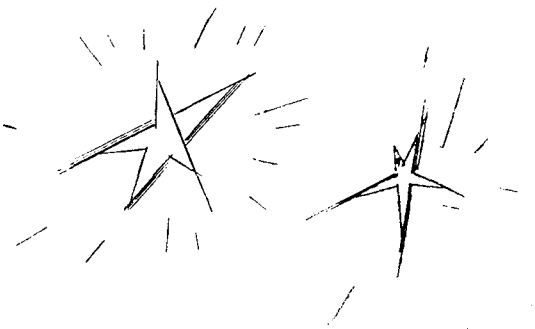

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fantastic atheism of that dream of destructive Utopianism uttered by H. G. Wells was depressing beyond words to tell. Which is why I use a few plain words to describe what he said as literally damnable.

For his awful vision was of a "new world order" in which that experiment in hellishness, Soviet communism, is to be regarded, so he said himself, as a necessary element of a society constructed by means of "scientific education." From that society, he averred, all the Gods ever sought or dreamed about by mankind are to be banished as nightmares would be banished from the world of our other dreams, if it were possible to do so. But to man, according to man's maundering prophet, H. G. Wells, all things are possible—presumably even the banishment of God from His own world. Even the God revealed in Christianity must logically be included in the Wellsian decree of exile of all supernatural religion from his "brave new world," as well as the exile of idolatry of the most degraded heathens—which, however, at its worst could not have been so appalling as is the blank-awful spirit of godlessness conjured up, amid immense applause, by Mr. Wells in his Town Hall talk and elsewhere.

About all a Christian can effectively do in the case of such nonsense is to pray that God will save us all from the new world disorders preached by H. G. Wells on Thanksgiving night—with the feeble assistance of President Wilbur of Stanford University, whose vague visions of a world which is to be led into vaguer and vaguer regions of vacuous idealism (God save the mark!) by the United States of America, after it has embraced the new gospel of human sufficiency, was almost as depressing as the Wellsian apocalypse.

NO—NO; and *No again!* Such materialistic mirages of "new world orders" really are misty emanations from the malodorous waste-lands of pandemonium. Christian folk, and with them, I believe, all others to whom God is the only acceptable, real first principle and the end of all world orders tolerable to God's children, will surely firmly reject such tenuous temptations to pride and self-sufficiency, spread abroad by modern wordwizards, like that great artist, H. G. Wells, and the pompous professors of merely materialistic science.

In the new world order which Christian and other God-seeking men even yet may fashion—in the spirit suggested by Saint Paul in the Epistle for the First Sunday of Advent, now drawing nigh—men "knowing that it is now the hour for us to rise from sleep; for now our salvation is nearer than when we believed"—we may be sure that one main feature of a social system really fit for realistic, honest, normal human beings will be an abundance in all countries of rural towns and villages, based upon family-owned and family-operated farms. Society will be based upon a mode of agriculture not perverted into a mass-production industry, with mobs of tenants and wage-working "hands," bossed by anonymous corporations, or by government bureaucrats, but an agriculture of free men, whose government must be their own instrument, not a tyrant, however benevolently inclined. And each such village and town shall have its parish church (can you not hear the innumerable bells chiming the Angelus at dawn and noon and dusk: and the sacred tolling of "De Profundis," and of the bells that sing at the nuptial Masses?) around which the homes and farms and factories cluster, even as all the cities and nations and races of the earth might be, and should be—and perhaps sometime shall be—gathered about the central support of the real world order, Mother Church.

ANOTHER bit of good news, which I heard nearly at the same time as when I was being depressed by the Town Hall radio delusions, made me remember one of the most uplifting passages of the Liturgy of the Mass—that incomparable Guide Book to the New World Order —"Sursum Corda!" And with its brief repetition here (but I shall return later to its fuller consideration) I must bring my column, built of scraps and bits of good and bad news, to an end on a note consonant with the spirit of thanksgiving. For reading about the arrival in New York from London, after being bombed out of his exile's retreat there, of Don Luigi Sturzo, I hastened to pay my respects to that great Catholic pioneer of the Church's gospel of social justice, the example of whose work and whose spirit must inspire all, inside or outside of the visible membership of Mother Church, in their efforts to realize the true world order.

For the present, I shall merely note that I talked with Don Luigi in front of the portable altar rescued by him from his bomb-shattered retreat in London, near the desk piled with the books and papers of his never-ending work. We discussed the world crisis and what hopes there are (and they are many and strong: but they must be worked for, with the kind of practical work that is the truest prayer of action, and not merely talked about) for the building of the new world order of peace and justice and love—but that's another story, as Kipling used to say (to egg us on to more reading of his tales). It is one quite appropriate to these Thanksgiving jottings, but already this column threatens to become a book—and indeed there is matter for many books in Don Luigi's career and present fate. However, this column will amply justify

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itself if it sends its readers to the most important of all such books, Don Luigi Sturzo's monumental and inspiring "Church and State" (Longmans, $5.00). But may I ask those of my readers who would care to do more than read Don Luigi, or read about him, those who may be willing to cooperate with some of his friends in furthering a plan for Don Luigi's sojourn in America, to communicate with me?

The Stage & Screen

The Corn Is Green

"THE CORN IS GREEN" is the first new play this season to ring the bell both with the critics and the public. It is not a great play, but it is a sincere and moving one, and its characterizations are vital and often original. The story of a young Welsh miner whose talent as a writer is discovered by a schoolmistress who gets him a scholarship to Oxford has in itself no novelty. Neither has the complication of the miner making love to a Cockney slavey and having a child by her the slightest originality. What is of interest are the people Emlyn Williams has portrayed. The play is said to be autobiographical, but whether it is or not, Mr. Williams knows the characters and makes us know them. Moreover, after the cads and trollops who have peopled most of the recent Broadway plays, how grateful we are to make the acquaintance of people we can like! Even the amoral little slavey has at least the gift of humor. The others, while aside from the schoolmistress no angels, are well on the angels' side, from the reformed shoplifter to the reactionary country squire. And the goodness of the schoolmistress is not harmed by her delightfully humorous tolerance. It is characterization rather than plot which makes "The Corn Is Green" the fine play it is, and Mr. Williams proves the old but sometimes forgotten truth that what is of supreme importance in a play is the characters.

Ethel Barrymore is starred as the schoolmistress. Miss Barrymore projects all her oldtime charm, takes the audience into her confidence and generally dominates the scene. I myself would have liked a little more cooperation with the other characters than Miss Barrymore affords them, but she proves once more that there is certainly but one Ethel Barrymore. Richard Waring makes the young miner a vital, poignant figure, and Thelma Schnee portrays the slavey with a variety, a humor and an incisive bite which marks her as one of our most promising young actresses. Other admirable performances are by Rhys Williams, Mildred Dunnock, Rosalind Ivan, and Edmund Breon. Herman Shumlin has directed with his accustomed skill. (*At the National Theatre.*)

Fledgling

THIS is a play which the daily newspaper critics, with the exception of Mr. John Mason Brown, have utterly misjudged. It is a play, not primarily about mercy killing, but about the conflict between religion and agnosticism. An agnostic writer has apparently weaned his Catholic-born wife away from the Church and has formed their daughter in his own image. The wife, fatally ill, is brought back to the Church by her brother, a Jesuit priest. The daughter, a complete materialist, poisons her mother to prevent her suffering, but at the end, when she realizes that she has only thrown her father into the arms of his mistress, she kills herself. Now the mercy killing, while the backbone of the melodrama, has little to do with the real subject of the play. Indeed we never believe the young girl would have killed the mother she loves. The core of the story is the conflict of ideas between the priest and the agnostic, the conflict and the consequent struggle for the wife's soul. These scenes are moving, but would have been more powerful had not Eleanor Carroll Chilton and Philip Lewis loaded the dice against the agnostic. He is made a cad and a hypocrite. It would have been better to give him a better chance, for then the priest's victory would have been the more significant. The young girl is exquisitely played by Sylvia Weld, and there are admirable performances by Lora Baxter, Tom Powers and Norma Chambers. Ralph Morgan was rather flat as the agnostic writer. "Fledgling" is a play which all Catholics should see, a play which while uneven in its writing and rather slow in movement, is literate and uplifting. (*At the Hudson Theatre.*)

GRENVILLE VERNON.

England Expects Every Cinemagoer

BRITISH films continue to be made and continue to come into this country. That they are not all propaganda is proved by Alexander Korda's new picture—as fine a fantasy as you'd want to see. *"Thief of Bagdad"* is sheer magic that should hold young and old spellbound by its artistry and enchantment. It might be a bit difficult to explain to the young a philosophy that laughs at the Thief's thievery and allows him to go unpunished. But for adventure, excitement, beauty, "Thief of Bagdad" has everything that the heart—and eye and ear—could desire: a princess (June Duprez) who is so beautiful that no man may look on her; a young king (John Justin) whose figure, face and voice were made for a king who *might* be pushed off the throne by the trickery of a wicked grand vizier, but who saves the princess and returns to take his rightful place; Conrad Veidt to personify evil as he usurps the throne, blinds the king, abducts the princess, uses his hypnotic eyes to further his diabolic designs before he meets his just deserts at the hands of the Thief; a silly old sultan so childish in his love for his palace of toys that he would sell his daughter to gain the wonderful flying horse. Mainly it has Sabu as the puckish Thief whose bravado and sense of humor and awe make plausible the hair-raising adventures through which he goes. He is perfectly suited for the rôle of the scamp who helps the king, tricks the Djinni (Rex Ingram), steals the all-seeing eye from the Goddess of Light, and is welcomed in the Magic Valley where everything is seen through the eyes of youth who might believe this story. Producer Korda and his staff must have believed in this Oriental tale, which, although it wanders a little too much, never deserts

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the spirit of the Arabian Nights. Its two directors, Ludwig Berger and Michael Powell, show their belief in magic by never allowing the film to become too earthy. The score and the use of sound throughout meet all challenges. The film's outstanding achievement is its sublime use of color; but its vivid, fanciful sets, riots in the Bagdad market, jewel-like palaces, raging sea, pink elephants, green men do not surpass the glorious color of the scenes photographed in the Grand Canyon.

The English have also sent us a couple of spy and intrigue melodramas. Both are concerned with the war, but both are entertaining in spite of obvious propaganda, which, being forewarned, you can take or leave. *"Blackout"* moves slowly at first, but has some effective shots of ships and interesting scenes of darkened, war-time England. Conrad Veidt this time, instead of being a sinister villain, turns out to be just what he was at the beginning of the picture—a Danish sea captain; Valerie Hobson is as pretty a spy as any of the traditional glamorous Mata Haris. The hide-and-seek story is given tensity through Michael Powell's direction. . . . *"Night Train,"* set in Czechoslovakia, England and Germany, takes place shortly after Munich and is full of suspense and thrills too. It includes cruel concentration camp scenes and Rex Harrison's neatly maneuvered rescue of Margaret Lockwood and her father. Carol Reed has directed the imaginative story to keep you on edge. But the picture's chief asset are those two dead-panned Englishmen who were so concerned about cricket scores in "The Lady Vanishes." Again they satirize English placid stolidity more devastatingly in one quick episode than a whole cast might do in a long film. They are so funny in "Night Train" that they make this unimportant picture a "must."

England's Noel Coward can be as witty and superficially artificial as any of the "smart" boys, but when he goes sentimental he drools. *"Bitter Sweet,"* made in Hollywood under W. S. Van Dyke's direction, with changes and a stuffiness that cannot be blamed on Coward, is one long and rather dull drool. Jeanette MacDonald and Nelson Eddy sing the nostalgically remembered Coward tunes ("I'll See You Again" and "Zigeuner" have stood up well these ten years) while a large cast, elaborate costumes, lavish sets and sweet-sad story are bathed in appropriate technicolor. PHILIP T. HARTUNG.

Books of the Week

Two Tales

For Whom the Bell Tolls. Ernest Hemingway. Scribner. $2.75.

AS A conservative estimate, one million dollars will be spent by American readers for this book. They will get for their money 34 pages of permanent value. These 34 pages tell of a massacre happening in a little Spanish town in the early days of the Civil War. The killing was done by loyalists, peasants, communists, republicans, anarchists. Those killed were correspondingly rebels, propertied people, fascists, monarchists. The 34 page value however does not depend on the ideological identity of either the killers or the killed. In civil war neither side proves too delicate to be incapable of what is here described. We have fully known this since the days of Thucydides. Hemingway's 34 page narrative is a bill of particulars supplementing the story of Corcyra as told by the great Greek historian. What we never had before Hemingway was a full portrayal of actual massacre being done and suffered by identified people whom we have known. Personal participation in massacre in order to know it "from the inside" is no longer indispensable. You can now get it from pages 96 to 130 of "For Whom the Bell Tolls."

Of the main story little need be said. It is infinitely inferior to Hemingway's prior work. Robert Jordan, the protagonist, is given us as the son of a coward, grandson of an American Civil War hero, quondam instructor in Spanish at the University of Montana, dynamiter extraordinary for the Spanish Loyalists and of course above all a virile (i. e., irresistible, sexual, athlete) pragmatic (i. e., "I have a dangerous job to do and do it I will as a brave man should") Hemingwegian (i. e., a native of Hemingway, a country where all the men have poker faces, carry intolerable burdens bravely, speaking the while in a clipped, nonchalant style which is an integral part of their irresistible masculine charm). Jordan fights, Jordan loves, Jordan dies. He is a gifted and happy man. Yet I must report that unlike his fellow countrymen he never gets complete reader sympathy. This should be attributed to the coexistence with Jordan's story of many independent episodes like that of the massacre. Attention is so often drawn away from Jordan that the reader cannot feel himself comfortably at home in the capital of Hemingway, prepared temporarily to live, eat, act, think and aspire the way the Hemingwegians do these things. So long as one feels alien to the imaginary country of Hemingway, so long must one view Jordan as a kind of visible Charlie McCarthy.

As to the love affair in this novel—phooey!

When I suffer nostalgically for repetition of the things Mr. Hemingway could tell me once upon a time, I shall return to the Story of Nick, to the Story of Francis Macomber, to a "Clean and Well Lighted Place." Mr. Hemingway: please publish the massacre scene separately, and then forget "For Whom the Bell Tolls"; please leave stories of the Spanish Civil War to Malraux; above all please tell us more stories to show that only the brave enjoy an existence fit to be had. We do not demand of you that you show us the way to peace and order. If we had them, could the land of Hemingway survive? Hemingwegians are not adapted to a stable, moral, peaceful world.

J. N. VAUGHAN.

The Voyage. Charles Morgan. Macmillan. $2.50.

CHARLES MORGAN has shown himself singularly adept at cloaking a love story with a spurious air of philosophical profundity. In "The Fountain" and "Sparkenbroke" he had to strain his talents as a novelist to keep his characters from perishing in the philosophical fog with which he invested them. In "The Voyage" he is more successful in presenting credible human beings; perhaps because his theme is the familiar one of the love of a simple saint for a sophisticated sinner. Despite the realism of the carefully rendered background—France under the early Third Republic—the book is an allegory of spiritual and carnal love.

Barbet Hazard, the owner of a Charante vineyard and

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the keeper of a prison, is a man of good will whose purity of heart carries him unscathed through the world. Thérèse Despreux is a tempestuous wanton, consumed by the ambition to become a great *diseuse*. She is as naturally urban as Barbet is rustic, as potentially evil as he is good. Her ambition saves her from the gutter and she becomes the idol of Paris, but finds success unsatisfying. The humble Barbet has a power over the self-willed Thérèse, and at the last she yields to it, finding with him the fulfillment that had so long escaped her.

This modern morality tale has the authentic flavor of the French tradition in the novel. The writing is sensitive and subtle, if at times stilted and overdone. What Mr. Morgan has to say could have been said in half the compass, and there is a pretentiousness about the book that is never justified. Catholic readers may find the casting of this morality offensive: Thérèse is the curé's daughter, Barbet the Protestant son of a Catholic mother.

MASON WADE.

CONTEMPORARY SOCIAL PROBLEMS

Scholasticism and Politics. Jacques Maritain. Macmillan. $2.50.

IT IS absurd to deny the upsurge of the new order here and abroad. The architects of Berlin are busy sending up and spreading out the steel girders that already reveal the contours of the Nazi new order. This is based on a pessimistic and cynical view of man and on the exploitation and enslavement of huge areas of Europe and Africa and Asia. Everywhere—even in England and in France—a new social reconstruction is taking place, power is shifting to different classes and groups, who have ideas that differ from those of the former lords and masters. It is important for men of good will, who seek to establish a democratic and pacific order based on justice and charity and on a realistic but optimistic view of man to acquaint themselves with the thought of the leading Catholic social philosophers Luigi Sturzo and Jacques Maritain. Don Luigi recently gave us his brilliant and monumental "Church and State." Now M. Maritain offers us his "Scholasticism and Politics."

This new book summarizes his theory of integral humanism and discusses the crisis of modern times. It shows the basis of human dignity to be man's capacity for knowing the truth; examines the essence of human personality, the freedom of the person and the meaning and finality of life. Freudianism and psychoanalysis are exposed as the springs feeding materialistic social streams. The book concludes with an analysis of the relation between Catholic action and political action.

It is difficult to convey the wisdom and beauty of this book. There are passages in it that reveal a great poet. Take his concluding statement for example. He has just been talking about the relation between Christianity and earthly civilizations:

> I should like to conclude by saying that Christianity now faces an absolutely vital problem of *spiritual universality*, evoking in a way the problem which, on a superior and transcendent plane, Christianity solved in the time of Saint Paul, in its escape from the claims of Judaeo-Christian particularism. It also faces the problem which, upon the plane of temporal civilization, it solved at the time of the fall of the Roman Empire. Practically this problem is solved only by an effusion of sanctity. It exacts an heroic detachment testifying to the primacy of the spirit. Above all must be affirmed the independence of the religion of Christ in regard to the régimes of earthly civilization and to the charge of established injustice which often encumbers these régimes; and also its absolute refusal in regard to the forms of idolatry which spring from Race, Class, or the Nation, or State, when they are elevated into absolutes.
>
> But it is not for an idealistic or angelic isolation that this detachment must be produced. The Sovereign Law of the Incarnation continues its influence here. While detaching the things of God's Kingdom from historical formations tending to bring into subjection that life which is freedom itself, the law of the Incarnation remains the law of superabundance and fruitfulness—the gift of self proper to love. And, consequently, the forces of Christianity must be involved again and anew in the flesh of humanity, to give birth, in the order of earthly civilization, to formations which are new and more pure.
>
> But Christian liberty is a pledged liberty, one which bears and transports the heavy mountains of history; because, and this is the very mystery of the Christian life, to the extent that this liberty becomes involved most deeply in history and the world, to that extent does it remain free; and bears witness to the fact that it arises neither from history nor from the world, but from the living God.

JOSEPH CALDERON.

MISCELLANEOUS

A Treasury of the World's Great Letters. M. Lincoln Schuster. S. & S. $3.75.

LETTERS are always highly personal documents; sometimes they remain just that, at other times they become literature, exemplifying what was termed in a more florid past the "epistolary art." Often such letters were written not simply for personal communication, but actually for publication.

Mr. Schuster's editorial criterion in "The World's Great Letters" seems usually to be personalist rather than literary. It is generally the personality who expresses himself in the letter and the nature of the expression, rather than letter writing itself, which interests him. Thus Walpole and Byron were two of the best and most prolific of English letter writers; the former, who is hardly an exciting personality today, is omitted; the latter, a great personality as well as an artist, is represented not by his splendid Venetian letters to Murray, but by a letter to the Countess Guiccioli, "that he cannot cease to love her."

Something like this was perhaps inevitable in a collection carefully designed for popular consumption; Mr. Schuster, however, succumbs too readily to this tendency. His "Classification of Letters by Subject" (pp. xxix-xxxiii) is a clear enough revelation of the results of his taste. He is led to include, incidentally, excerpts from the dubious Abelard-Héloïse correspondence, as well as letters which perhaps are more properly historical documents, and in which the writer (like Zola or Lenin) had in mind the general audience of his contemporaries and of posterity. This volume will hardly convey an adequate notion of the artistry and peculiar quality of the great letter writers, like Cicero, Petrarch, de Sévigné, or Walpole.

What Mr. Shuster's collection gives is a series of remarkable, sometimes sensational, flashes of insight into notable and great personalities. Since his approach is through the written words of the men and women themselves, it is dramatic and fascinating, and for most readers, novel.

RICHARD H. PERKINSON.

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BRIEFERS

The News and How to Understand It. Quincy Howe. S. & S. $2.00.

THIS BOOK discusses the various news services—AP, UP, INS, NANA. It talks about newspaper syndicates, radio commentators and the more famous columnists: Pegler, Johnson, Krock, Jay Franklin, Pearson and Allen, etc. It's written in a breezy cocksure style. Some of the news magazines and reviews are also examined. Informative but not profound or terribly original. His definitions could stand overhauling and his opinions cry for shadings. As they stand, they are often too simple.

Man and Modern Secularism. National Catholic Alumni Federation. Trinity Press. $1.00.

A COMPILATION of the addresses made at the 1939 convention of the National Catholic Alumni Federation by a number of prominent thinkers, including Father Gerald Phelan, Father John Courtney Murray, S.J., Louis Mercier and others. The various phases of the problem of secularism in education are examined, beginning with a definition of the term and tracing its development through American history until it reaches its zenith in the progressive education of John Dewey and his followers, where freedom has become a threat to liberty. The next section is devoted to the reaction against this naturalistic philosophy, while the remaining chapters treat of the Catholic contribution and the essential place of theology as a science in education.

Sidelights on the Catholic Revival. F. J. Sheed. S. & W. $1.25.

AS THE author informs us with disarming frankness this volume of seventy-odd miniature essays is formed of articles which originally appeared in his house organ, written for the purpose of selling books. There are few blurbs which would thus bear reprinting, but all of these are well worth preservation in permanent form. Mr. Sheed, though his style is very much his own, reminds one of Chesterton in his humor, insight and freshness of approach to ancient problems. There is appended to the volume an interesting set of biographical notes.

Ink on My Hands. Clayton Rand. Carrick and Evans. $3.00.

CLAYTON RAND as the Editor of the *Neshoba Democrat* guided this Mississippi town through the critical period of its development. By nature an adventurer, his was a career of experiment and innovation in which every experience was savored with honesty and enjoyment. A good story which reflects the turmoil of the 'twenties in a straightforward and humorous way.

In the Groove

LADIES and gentlemen, we now bring you a promotion stunt, courtesy of—tune out if you wish to miss the commercial— RCA Victor. It has been Victor's fancy to coax reviewers to speculate upon what ten Victor records they would be content to have on a desert island, assuming of course that they had a phonograph and needles also. So here goes. Victor has made the choice hard by stipulating that no more than four album sets may be included among the ten items. To get in as many records as possible, and to achieve some variety, I've picked the following: the monumental *B Minor Mass* of Bach, by Albert Coates conducting the London Symphony, with four good soloists (17 discs); the noble Brahms *Violin Concerto,* played by Jascha Heifetz with the Boston Symphony under Serge Koussevitzky (five discs); my favorite symphony, Beethoven's *Pastoral,* played by the greatest of conductors, Toscanini, with the fine BBC Symphony (five discs); substantial chunks from one of the loveliest and merriest of operas, Richard Strauss's *Der Rosenkavalier,* sung by members of the Vienna State Opera (13 discs).

It is painful to be obliged to limit two towering great composers, Mozart and Schubert, to single discs. Handily, two of Schubert's greatest songs, *The Trout* and *Death and the Maiden,* are sung on one record by a great artist, Marian Anderson. Mozart is about impossible to distil in one disc; I settle reluctantly for a couple of overtures, *The Marriage of Figaro* and *Il Seraglio,* by the Vienna Philharmonic under Clemens Krauss. Out of all the pages of Wagner, the obvious choice is the *Liebestod* from *Tristan und Isolde,* sung by the greatest voice of our time, Kirsten Flagstad, in the latest version (because better recorded) with Edwin MacArthur conducting the orchestra. Not to forget the piano, Chopin's *Nocturne No. 2* and *Mazurka No. 41,* played by Paderewski. Next to last, two Strauss waltzes, *The Blue Danube* and *Tales From the Vienna Woods,* performed by Leopold Stokowski and the Philadelphia Orchestra. Finally, a piece of jazz that would probably prove less ephemeral than most, Benny Goodman's longish (two twelve-inch sides) *Sing, Sing, Sing,* with drum-work by Gene Krupa.

Last month I mentioned some inexpensive album sets which could serve as Christmas gits. The foregoing desert island list might suggest some more, and to polish off the matter I list here, necessarily briefly, some of the major recordings of the past twelvemonth—a period, be it noted, when great technical advances were made, especially by Columbia. Unless otherwise indicated, records are twelve-inch, costing $1. Victor issued a complete set of the great Chopin *Mazurkas,* in three volumes (14 discs) beautifully played by Artur Rubinstein; the complete *Little Organ Book* of Bach, in three volumes (nine discs) played on a limpid "baroque" organ by E. Power Biggs; the complete *Musical Offering* of Bach, performed by a group led by Yella Pessl on the harpsichord (six discs). There were authoritative performances of some symphonies: the Beethoven *Fifth* by Toscanini and the NBC Symphony (four discs); the Mozart *G Minor* by the same combination (three discs); the Shostakovich *Fifth Symphony* by Stokowski and the Philadelphia Orchestra (six discs); the *Fantastic Symphony* of Berlioz by Bruno Walter and the Paris Conservatory Orchestra (six discs). Victor made the only existing records of the Mozart *Requiem,* by the University of Pennsylvania Choral Society with the Philadelphia Orchestra under Harl MacDonald.

Columbia's symphonies include Mozart's *Haffner,* by Sir Thomas Beecham and the London Philharmonic (three discs); Tchaikovsky's *Fifth* by Artur Rodzinski and the Cleveland Orchestra (five discs); Beethoven's *Pastoral,* by Dmitri Mitropoulos and the Minneapolis Symphony (five discs); Dvorak's *New World,* by Stokowski and his fine all American Youth Orchestra (six discs). For exotic tastes, there were Carlos Chavez's performance of *Mexican Music,* with a pick-up orchestra (four discs); Bartok's *Contrasts,* played by the composer, Joseph Szigeti and Benny Goodman; Igor Stravinsky conducting the New York Philharmonic in his *Sacre du Printemps* (four

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discs). One ten-inch album I liked especially: mountain ballads sung by Andrew Rowan Summers (four discs). And one single disc: the *Concerto for Harpsichord and Organ* by Padre Antonio Soler, by Ruggiero Gerlin and Noelie Pierront. And two outstanding Decca albums: beautifully recorded selections from Gershwin's *Porgy and Bess* (four discs) and *Songs of the South African Veldt* by Josef Marais (three ten-inch discs).

I can only touch briefly on the current offerings. Victor's two discs of incidental music to *Belshazzar's Feast* by Sibelius—in honor of his seventy-fifth birthday—is piquant Finnish Orientalism, well played by Robert Kajanus and the London Symphony (album M-715). Columbia issues a vigorous edition of the Sibelius *Second Symphony,* a popular nationalistic work, by Barbirolli and the New York Philharmonic (album M-423, five discs). Columbia's *"Wanderer" Fantasia* of Schubert, transcribed by Liszt, is a work whose beauty is not fully explored by Edward Kilenyi, pianist, with an anonymous orchestra under a certain Selmar Meyrowitz (album M-426, three discs). The Budapest Quartet gives a translucent performance of the lovely Ravel *Quartet in F* (Columbia album M-425, four discs). More excellent mountain balladeering: *Early American Carols and Folk Songs* by John Jacob Niles (Victor album M-718, four discs). Among the single discs, Dusolina Giannini sings the classically-curving *Casta Diva* from Bellini's *Norma* (Victor).

Now for the outstanding jazz records of 1940. Sadly enough, the best recording band of the year, that of Muggsy Spanier, has disbanded; Spanier has joined up with Bob Crosby. Muggsy's *Relaxin' at the Tour* (Bluebird), written by Spanier in collaboration with his pianist, Joe Bushkin, was the best of the year. Two other top-ranking recordings by the same band, with accent on Spanier's brilliant trumpeting, were *Some Day Sweetheart* and *Bluin' the Blues* (Bluebird). *Strut Miss Lizzie* (Commodore), featuring the brilliant musical behavior of Pee Wee Russell's clarinet, was a fine example of Chicago-style jazz. Other treasures: Duke Ellington's current *Jack the Bear* (Victor); his *Country Gal* (just out on Columbia); Wingy Manone's *When the Saints Go Marching In* and *How Long Blues* (Bluebird); Sidney Bechet's *Summertime* (Blue Note); John Kirby's *Blues Petite* (Okeh); Johnny Dodds' *Blue Washboard Stomp* (Bluebird); Bob Crosby's *All By Myself* (Decca); Commodore's Jam Session on *A Good Man Is Hard to Find;* Erskine Butterfield's *Tuxedo Junction* (Decca); Coleman Hawkins's *My Blue Heaven* (Bluebird); Count Basie's *Somebody Stole My Gal* (Columbia).

This year saw the rise of popular jazz albums, most of them either reissues of oldtime jazz classics, or new recordings of old favorites. Columbia blazed a trail with reissues of records by Bessie Smith, Fletcher Henderson, Louis Armstrong and Bix Beiderbecke. Best of the Decca sets were *The Wolverines,* recorded by Bud Freeman's band; *Chicago Jazz; Dixieland Jazz* by Bob Crosby. Out this month comes an album of Jerome Kern's show tunes played by Al Goodman and his orchestra; smooth and unpretentious, with excellent vocal support by Hollace Shaw and Floyd Sherman (Columbia). And another boogie-woogie album, an assortment of eight-to-the-bar specialists. This is less weighty than the average boogie-woogie collection, but it is still a lot to take at one sitting. It does, however, serve to illustrate the variations in this style, with pianists ranging from Joe Sullivan to Albert Ammons (Decca album 137). C. J. BALLIETT, JR.

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The Inner Forum

OBSERVATION of the season of Advent, which begins the ecclesiastical year for the Churches of the West, goes back into obscurity. The east of Christmas, for which it is a preparation, is probably not as ancient as Easter or Epiphany, for instance, but it was universally observed—either on December 25 or January 6—by the end of the fourth century. Evidences of the observation of Advent are somewhat scattered. A synod at Saragossa, Spain, in 380 prescribes that no one is permitted to be absent from church on any day from December 17 to the feast of the Epiphany. Saint Caesarius, Bishop of Arles, Provence (502-542), delivered homilies on preparing for the birthday of Christ, but treated the subject in such a way as to indicate that no general observance then existed. A synod held in Macon, Gaul (581), decreed that from November 11 to the feast of the Nativity the Masses on Mondays, Wednesdays and Fridays be offered according to the Lenten rite.

Pope Saint Gregory VII (1073-1085) reduced from five to four the number of Sundays in Advent. The period begins with the Sunday nearest the feast of Saint Andrew (November 30) and extends through Christmas Eve. It thus varies in length from 21 to 28 days. During this period, and up to the Feast of the Epiphany (January 6) the solemnization of matrimony is forbidden. The *Gloria* is not said at Mass; the *Te Deum* is omitted in the recitation of the Divine Office. Yet it is a period of joy and expectation as well as one of penance. Every day the Mass and Office include at least a commemoration of Advent.

The Advent collect, secret and postcommunion each day are prayers for the intercession of Our Lady. At Vespers the versicle and response read, "Drop down dew, ye heavens, from above, and let the clouds rain the just. Let the earth be opened and bud forth a savior."

Its significance was well expressed by the late Dom Virgil Michel, O.S.B., in his "The Liturgy of the Church" (1937): "A three-fold parallel . . . runs through the liturgy of Advent: the historical coming of Christ to this earth as the redeemer; then the coming of Christ to us, that is, the mystical birth of Christ in our souls, which was made possible by the first coming, of which the first coming is used as a type and inspiration; and the final coming of Christ, the glory of which will accrue to all those in whom the second birth is increasingly realized."

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Mason WADE'S life of Margaret Fuller was one of the books Wendell Willkie bought during the campaign.

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